

The Hikam of Ibn 'Ata'illah

Chapter 1

He said (may Allah be pleased with him!):

1. One of the signs of relying on one's own deeds is the loss of hope when a downfall occurs.
2. Your desire for isolation [tajrid], even though Allah has put you in the world to gain a living [fi'l-asbab], is a hidden passion. And your desire to gain a living in the world, even though Allah has put you in isolation, is a come down from supreme aspiration [al-himma al-'aliyya].
3. Antecedent intentions [sawabiq al-himam] cannot pierce the walls of predestined Decrees [aswar al-aqdar].
4. Rest yourself from self-direction [tadbir], for what Someone Else [ghayruka] has carried out on your behalf, do not you yourself undertake to do it.
5. Your striving for what has already been guaranteed to you, and your remissness in what is demanded of you, are signs of the blurring of your inner sight [basira].
6. If, in spite of intense supplication, there is a delay in the time of the Gift [al-'ata], let that not be the cause for your despairing. For He has guaranteed you a response in what He chooses for you, not in what you choose for yourself, and at the time He desires, not the time you desire.
7. If what was promised does not occur, even though the time for its occurrence had been fixed, then that must not make you doubt the promise. Otherwise, your intellect will be obscured and the light of your secret [sarira] extinguished.
8. If He opens a door for you, thereby making Himself known, pay no heed if your deeds do not measure up to this. For, in truth, He has not opened it for you but out of a desire to make Himself known to you. Do you not know that He is the one who presented the knowledge of Himself [ta'arruf] to you, whereas you are the one who presented Him with deeds? What a difference between what He brings to you and what you present to Him!
9. Actions differ because the inspirations of the states of being differ.
10. Actions are lifeless forms [suwar qa'ima], but the presence of an inner reality of sincerity [sirr al-ikhlas] within them is what endows them with life-giving Spirit.
11. Bury your existence in the earth of obscurity, for whatever sprouts forth, without having first been buried, flowers imperfectly.
12. Nothing benefits the heart more than a spiritual retreat wherein it enters the domain of reflection [maydan fikra].
13. How can the heart be illumined while the forms of creatures are reflected in its mirror? Or how can it journey to Allah while shackled by its passions? Or how can it desire to enter the Presence of Allah [hadratu'llah] while it has not yet purified itself of the stain of its forgetfulness? Or how can it understand the subtle points of secrets [daqa'iq al-asrar] while it has not yet repented of its offenses?
14. The Cosmos [al-kawn] is all darkness. It is illumined only by the manifestation of the Real [zuhur al-Haqq] in it. He who sees the Cosmos and does not contemplate Him in it or by it or before it or after it is in need of light and is veiled from the sun of gnosis by the clouds of created things [al-athar].

15. That which shows you the existence of His Omnipotence is that He veiled you from Himself by what has no existence alongside of Him.

16. How can it be conceived that somethings veils Him, since He is the one who manifests everything [azhara kulla shay']?

How can it be conceived that something veils Him, since He is the one who is manifest through everything [zahara bi-kulli shay']?

How can it be conceived that something veils Him, since He is the one who is manifest in everything [zahara fi kulli shay']?

How can it be conceived that something veils Him, since He is the Manifest to everything [az-Zahir li-kulli shay']?

How can it be conceived that something veils Him, since He was the Manifest [az-Zahir] before the existence of anything [qabla wujud kulli shay']?

How can it be conceived that something veils Him, since He is more manifest than anything [azhar min kulli shay']?

How can it be conceived that something veils Him, since He is the One [al-Wahid] alongside of whom there is nothing?

How can it be conceived that something veils Him, since He is nearer to you than anything else?

How can it be conceived that something veils Him, since, were it not for Him, the existence of everything would not have been manifest?

It is a marvel how existence [al-wujud] has been manifested in nonexistence [al-'adam] and how the contingent [al-hadith] has been established alongside of Him who possesses the attribute of timelessness [wasf al-qidam]!

Chapter II

And he said (may Allah be pleased with him!):

17. The one who wants there to appear in the moment other than what Allah has willed in it has not abandoned ignorance at all.

18. Your postponement of deeds till the time when you are free is one of the frivolities of the self [ru'unat an-nafs].

19. Do not request Him to get you out of a state to make use of you in a different one, for, were He to desire so, He could make use of you as you are, without taking you out!

20. Hardly does the intention of the initiate [himmat salik] want to stop at what has been revealed to him, than the voices of Reality [hawatif al-Haqiqah] call out to him: "That which you are looking for is still ahead of you!" And hardly do the exterior aspects of created beings display their charms, than their inner realities call out to him: "We are only a trial, so disbelieve not!"

21. Your requesting Him is suspecting Him. Your seeking Him is due to your absence from Him. Your seeking someone else is because of your immodesty towards Him. Your requesting someone else is on account of your distance [bu'd] from Him.

22. Not a breath [nafas] do you expire but a decree of Destiny has made it go forth.

23. Do not look forward to being free of otherness [al-aghyar], for that is indeed what cuts you off from vigilant attention [al-muraqaba] to him in that very state He has assigned to you.

24. So long as you are in this world, be not surprised at the existence of sorrow. For, truly, it manifests nothing but what is in keeping with its character or its inevitable nature.

25. A goal which you seek by your Lord is not held back and a goal which you seek by yourself is not easy.

26. Amongst the signs of success at the end is the turning to Allah at the beginning.

27. Whoever has a noble beginning has a noble end.

28. Whatever is deposited in the invisible world of the secrets [ghayb as-sara'ir] is manifested in the visible world of phenomena [shahadat az-zawahir].

29. What a difference between one who proceeds from Allah in his argumentation and one who proceeds inferentially to Him! He who has Him as his starting-point knows the Real [al-Haqq] as It is, and proves any matter by reference to the being of its Origin. But inferential argumentation comes from the absence of union with Him. Otherwise, when was it that He became absent that one has to proceed inferentially to Him? Or when was it that He became distant that created things [al-athar] themselves will unite us to Him?

30. Those who are united with Him: "Let him who has abundance spend out of his abundance." Those who are voyaging towards Him: "And whoever has his means of subsistence straightened to him . . ."

31. Those who are voyaging to Him are guided by the lights of their orientation [tawajjuh], whereas those who are united to Him have the lights of face-to-face confrontation [muwajaha]. The former belong to their lights, whereas the lights belong to the latter, for they belong to Allah and not to anything apart from Him. "Say: Allah! And then leave them plunging in their games."

Chapter III

And he said (may Allah be pleased with him!):

32. Your being on the lookout for the vices [al-'uyub] hidden within you is better than your being on the lookout for the invisible realities [al-ghayub] veiled from you.

33. The Real [al-Haqq] is not veiled from you. Rather, it is you who are veiled from seeing It, for, were anything to veil It, than that which veils It would cover It. But if there were a covering to It, than that would be a limitation of Its Being: every limitation of anything has power over it. "And He is the Omnipotent, above His servants."

34. Amongst the attributes of your human nature, draw away from every one that is incompatible with your servanthood, so that you may be responsive to the call of Allah and near His Presence.

35. The source of every disobedience, indifference, and passion is self-satisfaction. The source of every obedience, vigilance, and virtue is dissatisfaction with one's self. It is better for you to keep company with an ignorant man dissatisfied with himself than to keep company with a learned man satisfied with himself. For what knowledge is there in a self-satisfied scholar? And what ignorance is there in an unlearned man dissatisfied with himself?

36. The ray of light of inner sight [shu'a'u'l-basira] makes you witness His nearness to you. The eye of inner sight ['ayn al-basira] makes you witness your nonbeing ['adam] as due to His Being. The Truth of inner sight [Haqq al-basira] makes you witness His Being, not your nonbeing nor your being.

37. "Allah was, and there was nothing with Him, and He is now as He was."

Chapter IV

And he said (may Allah be pleased with him!):

38. Let not the intention of your aspiration shift to what is other than He, for one's hopes cannot outstrip the Generous [al-Karim].

39. Appeal to no one but Him to relieve you of a pressing need that He Himself has brought upon you. For how can someone else remove what He has imposed? And how can he who is unable to free himself of a pressing need free anyone else of one?

40. If you have not improved your thinking of Him because of His nature, improve it because of His treatment of you. For has He accustomed you to anything but what is good? And has He conferred upon you anything but His favors?

41. How astonishing is he who flees from what is inescapable and searches for what is evanescent! "For surely it is not the eyes that are blind, but blind are the hearts which are in the breasts."

42. Travel not from creature to creature, otherwise you will be like a donkey at the mill: roundabout he turns, his goal the same as his departure. Rather, go from creatures [al-akwan] to the Creator [al-Mukawwin]: "And that the final end is unto thy Lord." Consider the Prophet's words (Allah bless him and grant him peace!): "Therefore, he whose flight is for Allah and His Messenger, then his flight is for Allah and His Messenger; and he whose flight is for worldly gain or marriage with a woman, then his flight is for that which he flees to." So understand his words (upon him peace!) and ponder this matter, if you can. And peace on you!

Chapter V

And he said (may Allah be pleased with him!):

43. Do not keep company with anyone whose state does not inspire you and whose speech does not lead you to Allah.

44. You might be in a bad state; then, your associating with one who is in a worse state makes you see virtue [al-ihsan] in yourself.

45. No deed arising from a renouncing heart is small, and no deed arising from an avaricious heart is fruitful.

46. Good works are the results of good states. Good states arise from the stations wherein those having spiritual realization [at-tahaqquq] abide [maqamat al-inzal].

47. Do not abandon the invocation [adh-dhikr] because you do not feel the Presence of Allah therein. For your forgetfulness of the invocation of Him is worse than your forgetfulness in the invocation of Him. Perhaps He will take you from an invocation with forgetfulness [ghafla] to one with vigilance [yaqaza], and from one with vigilance to one with the Presence of Allah [hudur], and from one with the Presence of Allah to one wherein everything but the Invoked [al-Madhkur] is absent. "And that is not difficult for Allah."

Chapter VI

And he said (may Allah be pleased with him!):

48. A sign of the heart's death is the absence of sadness over the acts of obedience that you have neglected and the abandonment of regret over the mistakes that you have made.

49. Let no wrong-action [dhanb] reach such proportions in your eyes that it cuts you off from having a good opinion of Allah, for, indeed, whoever knows his Lord considers his wrong-action as paltry next to His generosity.

50. There is no minor sin [saghira] when His justice confronts you; and there is no major sin [kabira] when His grace confronts you.

51. No deed is more fruitful for the heart than the one you are not aware of and which is deemed paltry by you.

52. He only made an inspiration [warid] come upon you so that you would go [warid] to Him.

53. He made an inspiration come upon you so as to get you out of the grip of otherness [min yadi'l-aghyar] and free you from bondage to created things [min riqqi'l-athar].

54. He made an inspiration come upon you so as to take you out of the prison of your existence to the unlimited space of your contemplation [ila fad'i shuhudika].

55. Lights [al-anwar] are the riding-mounts [mataya] of hearts and of their secrets [al-asrar].

56. Light is the army of the heart, just as darkness is the army of the self. So when Allah wishes to come to the help of His servant, He furnishes him with armies of Lights [junud al-anwar] and cuts off from him the reinforcements of darkness and otherness [mada az-zulm wa'l-aghyar].

57. Insight [al-kashf] belongs to the Light [an-nur], discernment [al-hukm] to inner sight [al-basira], and both progression [al-iqbal] and retrogression [al-idbar] belong to the heart [al-qalb].

58. Let not obedience make you joyous because it comes from you, but, rather, be joyous over it because it comes from Allah to you. "Say: In the grace of Allah and His mercy, in that they should rejoice. It is better than that which they hoard."

59. He prevents those who are voyaging to Him from witnessing their deeds and those who are united with Him from contemplating their states. He does that for the voyagers because they have not realized sincerity [as-sidq] towards Allah in those works; and He does that for those united with Him because he makes them absent from contemplating those states by contemplating Him [bi-shuhudihi].

Chapter VII

And he said (may Allah be pleased with him!):

60. Were it not for the seeds of ambitious desire [tama'], the branches of disgrace [aghsan dhull] would not be lofty.

61. Nothings leads you like suspicion [al-wahm].

62. In your despairing, you are a free man [hurr]; but in your coveting, you are a slave ['abd].
63. Whoever does not draw near to Allah as a result of the caresses of love [mulatafat al-ihsan] is shackled to Him with the chains of misfortune [salasil al-imtihan].
64. Whoever is not thankful for graces [an-ni'am] runs the risk of losing them, and whoever is thankful fetters them with their own cords.
65. Be fearful lest the existence of His generosity towards you and the permanence of your bad behavior towards Him not lead you step by step to ruin. "We shall lead them to ruin step by step from whence they know not."
66. It is ignorance on the part of the novice [murid] to act improperly, and then, his punishment being delayed, to say, "If this had been improper conduct, He would have cut off help [imdad] and imposed exile [bi'ad]." Help [al-madad] could be cut off from him without his being aware of it, if only by blocking its increase [al-mazid]. And it could be that you are made to abide at a distance [al-bu'd] without your knowing it, if only by His leaving you to do as you like.
67. If you see a servant whom Allah has made to abide in the recitation of litanies [al-awrad] and prolonged His help therein, do not disdain what his Lord has given him on the score that you do not detect the signs of Gnostics [siyamu'l-'arifin] on him nor the splendor of Allah's lovers [bahjat al-muhibbin]. For had there not been an inspiration [warid], there would have been no litany [wird].
68. Allah makes some people abide in the service of Him [li-khidmatih], and He singles out others to love Him [bi-mahabbatih]. "All do we aid—these as well as those—out of the bounty of thy Lord, and the bounty of thy Lord is not limited."

Chapter VIII

And he said (may Allah be pleased with him!):

69. It is rare that divine inspirations [al-waridat al-ilahiyya] come except suddenly, and this, in order that they are protected from servant's claiming them by virtue of the existence of receptivity [bi-wujud al-isti'dad] on their part.
70. Infer the existence of ignorance in anyone whom you see answering all that he is asked or giving expression to all that he witnesses or mentioning all that he knows.
71. He made the Hereafter [ad-dar al-akhira] an abode to reward his believing servants only because this world cannot contain what He wishes to bestow upon them and because He deemed their worth too high to reward them in a world without permanence.
72. Whoever finds the fruit of his deeds [thamarat 'amalihi] coming quickly ['ajil] has proof of the existence of acceptance [al-qabul].
73. If you want to know your standing with Him, look at where He has made you abide now.
74. When He gives you obedience [at-ta'a], making you unaware of it because of Him, then know that He has showered you liberally with His graces both inwardly and outwardly.

Chapter IX

And he said (may Allah be pleased with him!):

75. The best that you can seek from Him is that which He seeks from you.

76. One of the signs of delusion is sadness over the loss of obedience coupled with the absence of resolve to bring it back to life.

77. The Gnostic [al-'arif] is not one who, when he makes a symbolic allusion, finds Allah nearer to himself than his allusion [ishara]. Rather, the Gnostic is he who has no symbolic allusion due to his self-extinction in His existence [li-fana'ihī fi wujudhihi] and self-absorption in contemplating Him.

78. Hope [ar-rajā] goes hand in hand with deeds, otherwise it is a wish [umniyya].

79. That which the Gnostics seek from Allah is sincerity in servanthood [al-'ubudiyya] and performance of the claims of Lordship [ar-rububiyya].

80. He expanded you so as not to keep you in contraction [al-qabd], and contracted you so as not to keep you in expansion [al-bast], and He took you out of both so that you not belong to anything apart from Him.

81. It is more dreadful for Gnostics to be expanded than to be contracted, for only a few can stay within the limits of proper conduct [hudud al-adab] in expansion [fi'l-bast].

82. Through the existence of joy the soul gets its share in expansion, but there is no share for the soul in contraction.

83. Sometimes He gives while depriving you, and sometimes He deprives you in giving.

84. When He opens up your understanding of deprivation [al-man'], the deprivation becomes the same as the gift [al-ata'].

85. Outwardly, creatures [al-akwan] are an illusion [ghirra], but, inwardly, they are an admonition ['ibra]. Thus, the self looks at the illusory exterior [zahiri ghirratiha] while the heart looks at the admonitory interior [batini 'ibratiha].

86. If you want a glory ['izz] that does not vanish, then do not glory in a glory that vanishes.

87. The real journey [at-tayy al-haqiqi] is when the world's dimension [masafat ad-dunya] is rolled away from you so that you see the Hereafter closer to you than yourself.

88. A gift from man is deprivation [al-hirman], and deprivation [al-man'] from Allah is beneficence [al-ihsan].

Chapter X

And he said (may Allah be pleased with him!):

89. Far be it from our Lord to repay with credit the servant who deals with Him in cash.

90. Suffice it as a repayment to you for obedience that He has judged you worthy of obedience.

91. It suffices as a reward for the doers of good that He has inspired obedience to Him in their

hearts and brought upon them the existence of intimacy between Him and them [mu'anasa].

92. Whoever worships Him for something he hopes for from Him, or in order to stave off the arrival of chastisement [al-'uquba], has not concerned himself with the real nature of His Attributes [bi-haqqi awsafihi].

93. When He gives, He shows you His kindness [birr]; when He deprives, He shows you His power [qahr]. And in all that, He is making Himself known to you and coming to you with His gentleness.

94. Deprivation [al-man'] hurts you only because of the lack of your understanding of Allah in it.

95. Sometimes He opens the door of obedience for you but not the door of acceptance; or sometimes He condemns you to wrong-action, and it turns out to be a cause of arriving at Him.

96. A disobedience that bequeathes humiliation and extreme need is better than an obedience that bequeathes self-infatuation and pride.

97. There are two blessings [ni'matan] from which no being can be separated and that are inevitable for every creature: the blessing of existence [al-ijad], and the blessing of sustenance [imdad].

98. He bestowed His blessings upon you, first, through giving you being [bi'l-ijad], and, second, through uninterrupted sustenance [imdad].

99. Your indigence [faqa] belongs to you essentially, for accidents do not abolish essential indigence: the trials that arrive in this world are but reminders to you of what you ignore of indigence.

100. The best of your moments is the one wherein you witness the existence of your indigence and, through it, arrive at the existence of your lowliness [dhilla].

101. When He alienates you from His creatures, then know that He wants to open for you the door of intimacy with Him.

102. When he loosens your tongue with a request, then know that He wants to give you something.

103. The imperative need [al-idtirar] of the Gnostic never vanishes, nor is his repose [qarar] in anyone but Allah.

104. He illumined exterior phenomena [az-zawahir] with the lights of His created things [athar]; and He illumined the secrets [as-sara'ir] with the uncreated lights of His attributes [bi-anwar awsafihi]. For that reason, the lights of exterior phenomena set, whereas the lights of hearts [al-qulub] and of the secrets [as-sara'ir] do not set. That is why it is said, "Verily, the sun of the day sets at night, but the Sun of hearts [shams al-qulub] never sets!"

Chapter XI

And he said (may Allah be pleased with him!):

105. To soften for you the suffering of affliction, He has taught you that He is the One who causes trials to come upon you [al-Mubli laka]. For the One who confronts you with His decrees of fate [al-aqdar] is the same who has accustomed you to His good choice [husn al-ikhtiyar].

106. Whoever supposes that His gentleness [lutf] is separate from His decree of fate [qadar] does so out of shortsightedness.

107. What is feared is not that the ways leading to Allah will be confusing to you; rather it is feared that passion will overcome you.

108. Praise be to Him who has hidden the secret of election [sirr al-khususiyya] by manifesting the quality of human nature [bi-zuhur wasf al-bashiriyya], and who has appeared in the sublimity of Lordship [‘azamat ar-rububiyya] by manifesting servanthood [al-‘ubudiyya]!

109. Do not press claims against your Lord because your request [matlab] has been delayed; instead, press claims against yourself for slackening in your behavior.

110. When He makes you submissive to His command outwardly and provides you with resignation to His power inwardly, then He has enhanced the greatness of the favor accorded you.

111. Not all who are most certainly amongst the chosen go on to perfect their liberation.

Chapter XII

And he said (may Allah be pleased with him!):

112. Only the ignorant man scorns the recitation of litany [al-wird]. Inspiration [al-warid] is to be found in the Hereafter, while the litany vanishes with the vanishing of this world. But it is more fitting to be occupied with something for which there is no substitute. The litany is what He seeks from you, the inspiration is what you seek from Him. But what comparison is there between what He seeks from you and what you seek from Him?

113. The arrival of sustenance [wurud al-imdad] is in accordance with receptivity [al-isti’dad], while the raying-out of lights [shuruq al-anwar] is in accordance with the purity of the secret [safa’u’l-asrar].

114. When the forgetful man [al-ghafil] gets up in the morning, he reflects on what he is going to do, whereas the man of intellect [al-‘aqil] sees what Allah is doing with him.

115. The devotees [al-‘ubbad] and the ascetics [az-zuhhad] are alienated from everything only because of their absence from Allah in everything. For had they contemplated Him in everything, they would not have been alienated from anything.

116. He commanded you in this world to gaze upon His creations [bi’n-nazar fi mukawwanatihi]; but in the Hereafter He will reveal to you the Perfection of His Essence [kamal dhatih].

117. When He knew that you would not renounce him, He made you contemplate that which issues from Him.

118. Since the Real [al-Haqq] knows of the existence of weariness on your part, He has varied the acts of obedience [at-ta’at] for you; and since He knows of the existence of impulsiveness [ash-sharah] in you, He has limited them to specific times [fi’l-awqat], so that your concern be with the performance of the ritual prayer [iqamat as-salat], not with the existence of the ritual prayer [wujud as-salat]. For not everyone who prays performs well [fa-ma kull musall muqim].

119. Ritual prayer is a purification for hearts [tuhra li’l-qulub] and an opening-up of the door of the

invisible domains [al-ghuyub].

120. Ritual prayer is the place of intimate discourses and a mine of reciprocal acts of purity wherein the domains of the secret are expanded and the rising gleams of light ray out. He knew of the existence of weakness in you, so He made the number of ritual prayers small; and He knew of your need of His grace, so He multiplied their fruitful results.

121. When you seek a repayment for a deed, the existence of sincerity [as-sidq] in it is demanded of you in return. As for the insincere [al-murib], the feeling of security from chastisement suffices him.

122. Do not seek recompense for a deed whose doer [fa'il] was not you. It suffices you as recompense for the deed that He accepts it.

123. When He wants to show His grace to you, He creates states in you and attributes them to you [khalaqa wa nasaba ilayk].

124. Were He to make you go back to yourself, there would be no end to the reasons for blaming you [li-madhammik]; and were He to manifest His beneficence [jud] to you, there would be no end to the reasons for praising you.

Chapter XIII

And he said (may Allah be pleased with him!):

125. Cling to the attributes of His Lordship and realize the attributes of your servanthood!

126. He has prohibited you from claiming for yourself what does not belong to you amongst the qualities of created beings; so would He permit you to lay claim to His Attribute, He who is the Lord of the Universe?

127. How can you break norms when you have not broken norms in yourself?

128. The point at issue is not the existence of searching. The point at issue is only that you be provisioned with virtuous conduct [husn al-adab].

129. Nothing pleads on your behalf like extreme need, nor does anything speed gifts to you quicker than lowliness and want.

130. If you were to be united with Him only after the extinction of your vices and the effacement of your pretensions, you would never be united with Him. Instead, when He wants to unite you to Himself, He covers your attribute [wasf] with His Attribute and hides your quality [na't] with His Quality. And thus He unites you to Himself by virtue of what comes from Him to you, not by virtue of what goes from you to Him.

Chapter XIV

And he said (may Allah be pleased with him!):

131. Were it not for the kindness of His veiling [jamil sitrih], no deed would be worthy of acceptance.

132. You are more in need in His forbearance [hilm] when you obey Him than you are when you disobey Him.

133. Veiling [as-sitr] is of two kinds: veiling of disobedience, and veiling in it. Common people seek Allah's veiling in disobedience out of the fear of falling in rank amongst mankind. The elect seek the veiling of disobedience out of the fear of falling from the sight of the Real King.

134. Whoever honors you honors only the beauty of His veil in you. Therefore, praise is to Him who veiled you, not to the one who honored and thanked you.

135. No one is a companion of yours except the one who, while knowing your defects, is your companion, and that is only your generous Lord. The best one to take on as a companion is He who does not seek you out for the sake of something coming from you to Him.

136. Were the light of certitude [nur al-yaqin] to shine, you would see the Hereafter so near that you could not move towards it, and you would see that the eclipse of extinction had come over the beauties of the world [mahasin ad-dunya].

137. It is not the existence of any being alongside of Him [wujud mawjud ma'ah] that veils you from Allah, for nothing [la shay'a] is alongside of Him. Rather, the illusion of a being alongside of Him [tawahhum mawjud ma 'ah] is what veils you from Him.

138. Had it not been for His manifestation in created beings [al-mukawwanat], eyesight would not have perceived them. Had His Qualities [sifat] been manifested, His created beings would have disappeared.

139. He manifests everything because He is the Interior [al-Batin], and He conceals the existence of everything because He is the Exterior [az-Zahir].

140. He has permitted you to reflect on what is in created beings, but He has not allowed you to stop at the selfsame creatures. "Say: Behold what is in the heavens and the earth!" Thus, with His words "Behold what is in the heavens" He opened up the door of instruction for you. But He did not say, "Behold the heavens," so as not to lead you to the mere existence of bodies.

141. The Universe [al-akwan] is permanent [thabita] through His making it permanent [bi-ithbatih], and it is annihilated [mamhuwwa] by the Unity of His Essence [bi-ahadiyyat dhatih].

Chapter XV

And he said (may Allah be pleased with him!):

142. People praise you for what they suppose is in you; but you must blame yourself for what you know is in it.

143. When the believer is praised, he is ashamed before Allah that he should lauded for an attribute he does not see in himself.

144. The most ignorant of all people is the one who abandons the certitude [yaqin] he has for an opinion [zann] people have.

145. When He lets praise of you burst forth, and you are not worthy of it, praise Him for what He is worthy of.

146. When ascetics [az-zuhhad] are praised, they are contracted, for they witness the praise as

coming from mankind [al-khalq]; but when gnostics [al-'arifun] are praised, they are expanded, for they witness the praise as coming from the Real King.

147. If when given something, the giving expands you, and if when deprived of something, the deprivation contracts you, then take that as the proof of your immaturity and the insincerity of your servanthood.

Chapter XVI

And he said (may Allah be pleased with him!):

148. When you commit a wrong action [dhanb], let it not be a reason for your despairing of attaining to righteousness [al-istiqaama] before your Lord, for that might be the last decreed for you.

149. If you want the door of hope opened for you, then consider what comes to you from Him; but if you want the door of sadness opened for you, then consider what goes to Him from you.

150. Sometimes He makes you learn in the night of contraction [layl al-qabd] what you have not learned in the radiance of the day of expansion [fi ishra'q nahar al-bast]. "You do not know which of them is nearer to you in benefit."

151. The hearts and the secrets are the places where lights arise.

152. There is a light deposited in hearts which is nourished by the Light coming from the treasures of the invisible realms.

153. There is a light wherewith He unveils for you His created things [al-athar], and there is a light wherewith He unveils for you His Attributes [awsaf].

154. Sometimes hearts stop at lights the same way selves are veiled by the opacities of otherness [bi-katha'if al-aghyar].

155. By way of honoring them, He veiled the lights of the secrets [anwar as-sara'ir] with the opacities of exterior phenomena [bi-katha'if az-zawahir] so they would not be abused when expressing themselves nor be accused of seeking renown.

Chapter XVII

And he said (may Allah be pleased with him!):

156. Glory be to Him who has not made any sign leading to His saints save as a sign leading to Himself, and who has joined no one to them except him whom Allah wants to joint to Himself.

157. Sometimes He reveals to you the invisible domain of His Realm but veils you from knowing the secrets of servants.

158. Whoever gets to know the secrets of servants without patterning himself on the divine mercifulness [ar-rahma al-ilahiyya], finds his knowledge a tribulation [fitna] and a cause for drawing evil [al-wabal] upon himself.

159. The self's share in disobedience is outwardly clear [zahir jali], while its share in obedience is

inwardly hidden [batin khafi]. To cure what is hidden is hard indeed!

160. Sometimes ostentation [ar-riya'] penetrates you in such a way that no one notices it.

161. Your desire that people know your election [khususiyya] is a proof of insincerity in your servanthood ['ubudiyya].

162. Make mankind's looking at you disappear by being content with Allah's looking at you! Slip away from their approach to you by contemplating His approach to you!

163. He who knows the Real [al-Haqq] contemplates Him in everything. He who is extinguished by Him is absent from everything. He who loves Him prefers nothing to Him.

164. Only His extreme nearness [shiddatu qurbih] to you is what veils the Real [al-Haqq] from you.

165. Only because of the intensity of His manifestation [shiddatu zahurihi] is He veiled, and only because of the sublimity of His light is He hidden from view.

Chapter XIII

And he said (may Allah be pleased with him!):

166. Let not your asking be the cause of His giving, for then your understanding of Him might diminish. Let your asking be for the sake of showing servanthood and fulfilling the rights of Lordship.

167. How can your subsequent asking be the cause of His prior giving?

168. Far be it from the decree of the Eternal [hukma'l-azal] to be subject to contingent causes [al-'ilal]!

169. His providential care ['inayatuh] of you is not due to anything coming from you. Where were you when He confronted you with His providence or met you face-to-face with His care? Neither sincerity of deeds nor the existence of states have any being in His Eternity. Instead, only pure bestowing and sublime giving are there.

170. He knew that servants would anticipate the emergence of the secret of providence [sirru'l-'inaya] in themselves, so He said, "He chooses whom He pleases for His Mercy." And He knew that, had He left them at that, they would have abandoned all effort by relying on the Eternal, so He said, "Surely the Mercy of Allah is nigh to the doers of good."

171. Everything depends on the Divine Will [al-mashi'a], but It Itself depends on nothing at all.

Chapter XIX

And he said (may Allah be pleased with him!):

172. Sometimes good behavior [al-adab] leads some to abandon asking because of confidence in His Providence or because concern for the invocation [dhikr] of Him inhibits their asking of Him.

173. Only he to whom forgetfulness is possible is to be reminded; and only he to whom

inattention is possible is to be warned.

174. The feast-days of novices [al-muridun] are when states of need arrive.

175. Sometimes you will find more benefit in states of need than you find in fasting or ritual prayer.

176. States of need are gift-laden carpets.

177. If you want gifts to come your way, then perfect the spiritual poverty [al-faqr] you have. "Alms are only for the poor."

178. Realize your attributes and He will help you with His Attributes; realize your lowliness and He will help you with His Sublimity; realize your impotence and He will help you with His Power; realize your weakness and He will help you with His Might and Force!

Chapter XX

And he said (may Allah be pleased with him!):

179. Sometimes a miracle [karama] is given to someone whose righteousness [al-istiqama] is not perfect.

180. A sign that it is Allah who has put you in a certain state [fi'sh-shay] is that He keeps you in it while its fruits [an-nata'ij] mature.

181. He who holds forth from the standpoint of his own virtuous behavior will be silenced by misbehavior toward Allah; but he who holds forth from the standpoint of Allah's virtuous behavior toward him will not be silenced when he misbehaves.

182. The lights of sages [anwaru'l-hukama'] precede from words, so that, wherever illumination [at-tanwir] occurs, the expression [at-ta'bir] arrives there.

183. Every utterance [kalam] that comes forth does so with the vestment of the heart [kiswa'tu'l-qalb] from which it emerged.

184. Whoever has been given permission to speak out [at-ta'bir] will have his expression ['ibara] understood by his listeners, and his symbolic allusion [ishara] will be clear to them.

185. Sometimes the lights of inner realities will appear eclipsed when you have not been given permission to give expression to them.

186. Their expression ['ibaratuhum] is either because of the overflow of ecstasy [li-laydani wajd] or for the purpose of guiding a disciple [murid]. The former case is that of those who progress [as-salikun]; the latter case is that of those who possess a function [arbabu'l-mukna] and have realization [al-mutahaqqiqun].

187. An expression ['ibara] is nourishment to needy listeners, and your share in it is only what you can eat thereof.

188. Sometimes he who draws near to a station [maqam] expresses himself about it, and sometimes he who is united with it expresses himself about it. That is confusing save to him who has insight.

189. He who is progressing [as-salik] should not give expression to his inspirations [waridat], for that indeed diminishes their activity in his heart and strips him of sincerity with his Lord.

190. Do not stretch out your hand to take from creatures unless you see that the Giver [al-Mu'ti] amongst them is your Lord. If such is your case, then take what knowledge says is suitable for you.

191. Sometimes the Gnostic [al-'arif] is ashamed of submitting his urgent need [haja] to his Lord, being content with His Will [mashi'a]. So why should he not be ashamed of submitting his urgent need to a creature of His?

Chapter XXI

And he said (may Allah be pleased with him!):

192. When two matters seem confusing to you, see which is heavier on the self and follow it through. For, indeed, nothing weighs on the self but that which is true.

193. A sign of compliance with passion is haste in supererogatory good actions and sluggishness in fulfilling obligatory actions.

194. He laid down specific times for acts of obedience so that procrastination would not divert you from them, and He made each time-span ample so that you would have a share in making the choice.

195. He knew of the irresolution of servants in dealing with Him, so He made obedience [ta'a] to Him obligatory for them. Thus, He drove them to obedience with the chains of obligation [bi-salsili'l-ijab]. Your Lord is amazed at people who are driven to Paradise [al-janna] with chains!

196. He made the service [khidma] of Him obligatory upon you, which is as much to say that He made entry into His Paradise obligatory for you.

197. Whoever finds it astonishing that Allah should save him from his passion or yank him out of his forgetfulness has deemed the divine Power [al-qudra al-ilahiyya] to be weak.

198. Sometimes darkresses come over you so that He can make you aware of the value of His blessings upon you.

199. He who does not know the value of graces when they are present knows their value when they are absent.

200. The inspirations of grace should not so dazzle you as to keep you from fulfilling the obligations of thankfulness, for that would indeed bring you down in rank.

201. Incurable sickness results when the sweetness of passion takes possession of the heart.

202. Only an unsettling fear [khawf muz'ij] or a restless desire [shawq muqliq] can expel passion from the heart.

203. Just as He does not love the deed possessed of associationism, so, similarly, He does not love the heart possessed of associationism. As for the deed possessed of associationism, He does not accept it; and as for the heart possessed of associationism, He does not draw near to it.

Chapter XXII

And he said (may Allah be pleased with him!):

204. There are lights that are allowed to arrive [al-wusul] and lights that are allowed to enter [ad-dukhu].

205. Sometimes lights come upon you and find the heart stuffed with forms of created things [suwaru'l-athar]; so they go back from whence they descended.

206. Empty your heart of otherness [al-aghyar] and you will fill it up with Gnostic intuitions [al-ma'arif] and secrets [al-asrar].

207. Do not deem His giving to be slow; but, rather, deem your approaching to be slow.

208. It is possible to fulfill some obligations at times, but it is impossible to fulfill the obligations of every moment, for there is no moment wherein Allah does not hold against you a new obligation or a definite matter. So how can you fulfill therein someone else's obligation when you have not fulfilled Allah's?

209. That part of your life that has gone by is irreplaceable, and that which has arrived is priceless.

210. You do not love anything without being its slave, but He does not want you to be someone else's slave.

211. Your obedience does not benefit Him, and your disobedience does not harm Him. It is only for your own good that He commanded the one and prohibited the other.

212. His Sublimity is not increased when someone draws near to Him, and His Sublimity is not decreased when someone draws away from Him.

Chapter XXIII

And he said (may Allah be pleased with him!):

213. Your union with Allah is union through knowledge of Him [al-'ilmu bihi]. Otherwise, Allah is beyond being united with anything or anything being united with Him!

214. Your nearness [qurb] to Him is that you contemplate His nearness. Otherwise, what comparison is there between you and the existence of His nearness?

215. The inner realities [al-haqa'iq] arrive synthetically [mujmala] in the state of illumination [at-tajalli], while their explanation [al-bayan] comes after retention [al-wa'y]. "So when We recite it, follow its recitation. Again on Us rests the explaining of it."

216. When divine inspirations come upon you, they demolish your habits. "Surely the kings, when they enter a town, ruin it."

217. The inspiration comes from the Presence of the Omnipotent. As a result, nothing opposes it without being smashed to bits. "Nay, but We hurl the Truth against falsehood, and it prevails against it, and lo! Falsehood vanishes."

218. How can the Real [al-Haqq] be veiled by something, for He is apparent [zahir] and has present existence [mawjud hadir] in that wherewith He is veiled?

219. Do not lose in the acceptance of an act of yours wherein you found no awareness of the Divine Presence. Sometimes He accepts an act the fruit of which you have not perceived right away.

220. Do not attest to the validity of an inspiration [warid] whose fruits you know not. The purpose of rainclouds is not to give rain; their only purpose is to bring forth fruit.

221. After the lights of inspirations have rayed out and their secrets have been deposited, do not seek their continuance, for you have in Allah one who enables you to dispense with everything; but nothing enables you to dispense with Allah.

222. The proof that you have not found Him is that you strive for the permanency of what is other than He, and the proof that you are not united to Him is that you feel estranged at the loss of what is other than He.

Chapter XXIV

And he said (may Allah be pleased with him!):

223. While varied in its manifestations, felicity [an-na'im] is only for the sake of contemplating and drawing near to Him; and, while varied in its manifestation, suffering [al-'adhab] is due only to the existence of His veil. Therefore, the existence of the veil is the cause of the suffering, and the perfection of felicity is through the vision of the Countenance of Allah, the Generous.

224. That which hearts find in the way of worries and sadnesses is due to that which prevents their having inner vision [al-'iyan].

225. Part of the completeness of blessing [tamamu'n-ni'ma] accorded you lies in His providing you with what suffices and holding you back from what makes you exceed bounds.

226. So that your sadness over something be little, let your joy in it be little.

227. If you do not want to be dismissed, then do not take charge of a post that will not always be yours.

228. If beginnings make you desirous, endings will make you abstinent; if their exteriors invited you, their interiors will hold you back.

229. He only made the world the place of otherness and the mine of impurities in order to induce detachment [tazhid] in you towards it.

230. He knew you would not accept mere counsel, so He made you sample the world's taste to a degree that separation from it would be easy for you.

231. Beneficial knowledge is the one whose ray of light expands in the mind and uncovers the veil over the heart.

232. The best knowledge is the one accompanied by fear [al-khashya].

233. If fear is united with knowledge, then it is for you; if not, then it is against you.

234. When it pains you that people do not come to you, or that they do so with rebukes, then return to the knowledge of Allah in you. But if the knowledge of Him in you does not satisfy you, then your affliction at not being content with that knowledge is greater than your affliction at the pain coming from people.

235. He only made affliction come at the hands of people so that you would not repose in them. He wanted to drive you out of everything so that nothing would divert you from Him.

236. If you know that the devil does not forget you, then do not forget, for your part, Him who has your forelock in His hand.

237. He made the devil your enemy so that, through him, He could drive you toward Himself, and He stirred up your self against you so that your drawing near to Him would be permanent.

Chapter XXIV

And he said (may Allah be pleased with him!):

238. He who attributes humility to himself is really proud, for humility arises only out of a sublime state. So when you attribute humility to yourself, then you are proud.

239. The humble man is not the one who, when humble, sees that he is above what he does; instead, the humble man is the one who, when humble, sees that he is below what he does.

240. Real humility arises from the contemplation of His Sublimity and the illumination of His Attribute.

241. Only the contemplation of His Attribute can dislodge you from your attribute.

242. The believer is he who is diverted from extolling himself by the praise of Allah, and who is diverted from remembering his good fortune by the fulfillment of Allah's rights.

243. The lover [al-muhibb] is not the one who hopes for a recompense from his beloved [mahbub] or seeks some object. The lover is indeed the one who spends generously on you; the lover is not the one on whom you spend generously.

244. Were it not for the arenas of the selves [mayadinu'n-nufus], the progress of the adepts [sayru's-sa'irin] could not be realized: there is no distance [masafa] between you and Him that could be traversed by your journey, nor is there any particle between you and Him that could be effaced by your union with Him.

245. He put you in the intermediary world [al-'alam al-mutawassit] between His Kingdom [Mulk] and His Realm [Malakut] to teach you the majesty of your rank amongst His created beings and that you are a jewel [jawhara] wherein the pearls of His creations [mukawwanat] are hidden.

246. The Cosmos [al-kawn] envelops you in respect to your corporeal nature [juthmaniyya], but it does not do so in respect to the immutability of your spiritual nature [thubutu ruhaniyyatika]. So long as the domains of the Invisible Worlds have not been revealed to him, the being in the Cosmos is imprisoned by his surroundings and confined in the temple of his nature.

247. So long as you have not contemplated the Creator, you belong to created beings; but when you have contemplated Him, created beings belong to you.

248. The permanence of wilaya does not necessitate that the attribute of human nature be

nonexistent. Wilaya is analogous to the illumination of the sun in daytime: it appears on the horizon but it is not part of it. Sometimes the suns of His Attributes shine in the night of your existence, and sometimes He takes that away from you and returns you to your existence. So daytime is not from you to you, but, instead, it comes upon you.

249. By the existence of His created things [athar], He points to the existence of His Names [asma'], and by the existence of His Names, He points to the immutability of His Qualities [awsaf], and by the existence of His Qualities, He points to the reality of His Essence [dhat], since it is impossible for a quality to be self-subsistent. He reveals the perfection of His Essence to the possessors of attraction [arbabu'l-jadhb]; then He turns them back to the contemplation of His Qualities; then He turns them back to dependence [at-ta'alluq] on His Names; and then He turns them back to the contemplation of His created things. The contrary is the case for those who are progressing [as-salikin]: the end for those progressing [nihayatu's-salikin] is the beginning for the ecstatics [bidyatu'l-majdubin], and the beginning for those progressing is the end for the ecstatics. But this is not to be taken literally, since both might meet in the Path [at-tariq], one in his descending [fi tadallihi], the other in his ascending [fi taraqqihi].

250. It is only in the invisible world of the Realm [fi ghaybi'l-malakut] that the value of the lights of the hearts and of the secrets [anwar al-qulub wa'l-asrar] is known, just as the lights of the sky do not manifest themselves except in the visible world of the Kingdom [shahadatu'l-mulk].

251. For those who do good, finding the fruits of acts of obedience in this world is glad tidings of their recompense in the Hereafter.

252. How can you seek recompense for a deed He bestowed upon you out of charity? Or how can you seek recompense for a sincerity He gave you as a gift?

253. The lights of some people precede their invocations [adhkar], while the invocations of some people precede their lights. There is the invoker [dhakir] who invokes so that his heart be illumined; and there is the invoker whose heart has been illumined and he invokes.

254. The outer aspect of an invocation [zahiru dhikr] would not be, save for the inner aspect of contemplation and meditation [batinu shuhud wa fikra].

255. He made you witness before He asked you to give witness. Thus, the outer faculties speak of His Divinity while the heart and the secret have realized His Unity.

256. He ennobled you with three charismatic gifts [karamat]: He made you an invoker [dhakir] of Him, and had it not been for His grace, you would not have been worthy of the flow [jarayan] of the invocation of Him in you; He made you remembered by Him [madhkur bihi] since He confirmed His relationship to you; and He made you remembered by those with Him [madhkur 'indahu], thereby perfecting His grace upon you.

257. Many a life is long in years but meager in fruits, and many a life is short in years but rich in fruits.

258. He who has been blessed in life attains, in a short time, to such gifts from Allah that no expression or symbolic allusion could describe.

259. It would be disappointing—really disappointing—if you were to find yourself free of distractions and then not head towards Him, or if you were to have few obstacles and then not move on to Him!

260. Reflection [al-fikra] is the voyage of the heart in the domains of otherness [mayadin al-aghya].

261. Reflection is the lamp of the heart [siraj al-qalb]; so when it goes away, the heart has no illumination.

262. Reflection is of two kinds: the reflection of belief [tasdiq] and faith [iman], and the reflection of contemplation [shuhud] and vision ['iyan]. The first is for the adepts of reflective thought [arbab al-i'tibar], the second is for the adepts of contemplation and intellectual vision [arbab ash-shuhud wa'l-istibsar].

The First Treatise

Amongst the things that he wrote to some of his friends, he said (may Allah be pleased with him!):

Now then, beginnings are the places where endings are revealed, so that whoever begins with Allah ends up with Him. He is the one you love and rush to in whatever occupies you, and He is the one you prefer in whatever you turn away from. Whoever is certain that Allah seeks him is sincere in seeking Him. He who knows that all matters are in Allah's hands is recollected through trust in Him. Indeed, it is inevitable that the pillars of this world's house of existence be destroyed and that its precious things be stripped away. For the intelligent man is more joyous over the permanent than he is over the evanescent. His light rays out, glad tidings have come to him. Thus, he turns away from this world, takes no notice of it, shuns it altogether. He does not therefore take it as a homeland, nor does he turn it into a home, but rather, while in it, he arouses his fervor towards Allah and seeks His help in going to Him. His determination, a riding-mount, is restless and ever on the move till it comes to kneel down in the Presence of the Holy [hadrat al-quds] on the carpet of intimacy, the place of reciprocal disclosure [al-mufataha], confrontation [al-muwahaja], companionship [al-mujalasa], discussion [al-muhadatha], contemplation [al-mushahada], and viewing [al-mutala'a].

The Presence is the nesting-place of the hearts of initiates: they take refuge in it and dwell in it. Then, when they descend to the heaven of obligations and the earth of varied fortune, they do so with permission [al-idhn], stability [at-tamkin], and certainty [al-yaqin]. For they have not so descended to obligations through improper conduct or forgetfulness, nor to fortune through passion and pleasure; but, instead, they have entered therein by Allah and for Allah and from Allah and to Allah.

"And say: My Lord, make me enter a truthful entering, and make me go forth a truthful going forth," so that I will see Your strength and power when you make me enter, and will submit and conform myself to You when You make me go out. Give me an authority from You, and an ally that helps me or that helps others through me, but not one that goes against me: one that helps me against self-regard and extinguishes me from the realm of my sense.

The Second Treatise

Amongst the things that he wrote to some of his friends, he said (may Allah be pleased with him!):

If the eye of the heart ['ayn al-qalb] sees that Allah is One [wahid] in His blessings [minna], the Law [ash-shari'a] requires nevertheless that thanks be given to His creatures.

Indeed, in the matter of blessings, people fall into three classes. The first is that of the forgetful person [al-ghafil], immersed in his forgetfulness, strong in the domain of his senses, blurred in inner vision [hadratu qudsihi]. He sees generosity as coming from mankind and does not contemplate it as coming from the Lord of the Universe, either out of conviction, in which case his associationism [shirk] is evident, or else out of dependence, in which case his associationism is

hidden.

The second is that of the possessor of a spiritual reality who, by contemplating the Real King, is absent from mankind, and who, by contemplating the Cause of effects, is extinguished from the effects. He is a servant brought face to face with reality [al-haqiqah], the splendor of which is apparent in him. A traveler in the path, he has mastered its extent, except that he is drowned in lights and does not perceive created things. His intoxication [sukr] prevails over his sobriety [sahw], his union [jam'] over his separation [baqa'] and his absence [ghayba] over his presence [hudur].

The third is that of a servant who is more perfect than the second: he drinks, and increases in sobriety; he is absent, and increases in presence; his union does not veil him from his separation, nor does his separation veil him from his union; his extinction does not divert him from his permanence, nor does his permanence divert him from his extinction. He acts justly towards everyone and gives everyone his proper due.

Abu Bakr as-Siddiq said to 'A'isha, when her innocence was revealed through the tongue of the Prophet, "O 'A'isha, be grateful to the Messenger of Allah!" Then she said, "By Allah, I will be grateful only to Allah!" Abu Bakr had pointed out to her the more perfect station, the station of permanence which requires the recognition of created things [ithbat al-athar]. Allah says, "Give thanks to Me and to thy parents." And the Prophet said, "He who does not thank mankind does not thank Allah." At that time she was extinguished from her external senses, absent from created things, so that she contemplated the One, the Omnipotent [al-Wahid al-Qahhar].

The Third Treatise

He said (may Allah be pleased with him!):

When he was asked with regard to the Prophet's words, "And my eye's refreshment [qurrah 'ayni] has been made to be in ritual prayer [as-salat]," whether that was particular with the Prophet or whether anyone else had a share or part in it, he answered:

In truth, the eye's refreshment through contemplation [ash-shuhud] is commensurate with the gnosis [al-ma'rifa] of the Object of contemplation [al-mashhud]. The gnosis of the Messenger is not like the gnosis of someone else; accordingly, someone else's refreshment of eye is not like his.

We have said that the refreshment of his eye in his ritual prayer was through his contemplating the Majesty of the Object of contemplation [bi-shuhudihi jalala mashhudihi] only because he himself indicated as much by his words, "in ritual prayer." For he did not say "by means of ritual prayer," since his eye was not refreshed by means of something other than his Lord. How could it be otherwise? For he points to this station, and commands others to realize it, with his words, "Adore Allah as if you were seeing Him," since it would have been impossible for him to see Him and at the same time to witness someone other than He alongside of Him.

Suppose someone were to say, "The refreshment of the eye can be by means of ritual prayer because it is a grace of Allah and emerges from Allah's blessing itself. So, how is it one cannot ascend by means of it, or how is it the eye's refreshment cannot be had by means of it? For Allah says, "Say: In the grace of Allah and in His mercy, in that they should rejoice."

If that were said, then you must know that the significance of the verse, for those who meditate on the secret of the statement, is to be found in the main clause, for He says, "in that they should rejoice," and not, "in that you should rejoice, O Muhammad." In other words, "Say to them: Let them rejoice by means of generous acts and kindness, but let your rejoicing be with Him who is

kind,” just as, in another verse, He says, “Say: Allah! Then leave them plunging in their games.”

The Fourth Treatise

Amongst the things that he wrote to some of his friends, he said (may Allah be pleased with him!):

With regard to the advent of blessings [wurud al-minan], people are of three categories. To the first belongs the one who rejoices at blessings, not in respect to their Bestower or Originator, but in respect to his pleasure in them. This man belongs to the forgetful [al-ghafilun], and Allah’s words hold true for him: “Until, when they rejoiced in that which they were given, We seized them suddenly.”

To the second category belongs the one who rejoices at blessings inasmuch as he sees them as blessings from Him who sent them or as grace from Him who brought it to him. Allah refers to him with His words: “Say: In the grace of Allah and in His mercy, in that they should rejoice. It is better than that which they hoard.”

To the third category belongs the one who rejoices in Allah. Neither the exterior pleasure of blessings nor their interior graces divert him. Instead, his vision of Allah, his concentration on Him [al-jam’ ‘alayh], divert him from what is other than He, so that he contemplates only Him. Allah refers to him with His words: “Say: Allah! Then leave them plunging in their games.” Allah revealed to David: “O David, say to the truthful: Let them rejoice in Me, let them find joy in My invocation!”

May Allah make your joy and ours in Him and in the contentment that comes from Him; may He put us amongst those who understand Him; may He not put us amongst the forgetful; and may He voyage with us in the path of those who have fearful awareness of Allah with His grace and generosity!

Intimate Discourses [al-Munajat]

And he said (May Allah be pleased with him!):

1. My God, I am poor in my richness, so why should I not be poor in my poverty?
2. My God, I am ignorant in my knowledge, so why should I not be most ignorant in my ignorance?
3. My God, the diversity of Your planning [tadbir] and the speed of Your predestined decrees prevent Your servants, the Gnostics, from relying on gifts or despairing of You during trials.
4. My God, from me comes what is in keeping with my miserliness, and from You comes what is in keeping with Your generosity.
5. My God, You have attributed to Yourself gentleness and kindness towards me before the existence of my weakness; so, would You then hold them back from me after the existence of my weakness?
6. My God, if virtues [al-mahasin] arise from me, that is because of Your grace: it is Your right to bless me. And if vices [al-masai] arise from me, that is because of Your justice: it is Your right to

have proof against me.

7. My God, how can You leave me to myself, for You are responsible for me? And how could I be harmed while You are my Ally? Or how could I be disappointed in You, my Welcomer? Here am I seeking to gain access to You by means of my need of You. How could I seek to gain access to You by means of what cannot possibly reach you? Or how can I complain to You of my state, for it is not hidden from You? Or how can I express myself to You in my speech, since it comes from You and goes forth to You? Or how can my hopes be dashed, for they have already reached You? Or how can my states not be good, for they are based on You and go to You?

8. My God, how gentle You are with me in spite of my great ignorance, and how merciful You are with me in spite of my ugly deeds!

9. My God, how near You are to me, and how far I am to You!

10. My God, how kind You are to me! So what is it that veils me from You?

11. My God, from the diversity of created things and the changes of states, I know that it is Your desire to make Yourself known to me in everything so that I will not ignore You in anything.

12. My God, whenever my miserliness makes me dumb, Your generosity makes me articulate, and whenever my attributes make me despair, Your grace gives me hope.

13. My God, if someone's virtues are vices, then why cannot his vices be vices? And if someone's inner realities are pretensions, then why cannot his pretensions be pretensions?

14. My God, Your penetrating decision and Your conquering will have left no speech to the articulate nor any state to him who has a state.

15. My God, how often has Your justice destroyed the dependence I built up on obedience or the state I erected! Yet, it was Your grace that freed me of them.

16. My God, You know that, even though obedience has not remained a resolute action on my part, it has remained as a love and a firm aspiration.

17. My God, how can I resolve while You are the Omnipotent [al-Qahir], or how can I not resolve while You are the Commander [al-Amir]?

18. My God, my wavering amongst created things inevitably makes the Sanctuary distant, so unite me to You by means of a service that leads me to You.

19. My God, how can one argue inferentially of You by that which depends on You for its existence? Does anything other than You manifest what You do not have, so that it becomes the manifester [al-muzhir] for You? When did You become so absent that You are in need of a proof giving evidence of You? And when did You become so distant that it is created things themselves that lead us to You?

20. My God, blind is the eye that does not see You watching [raqib] over it, and vain is the handclasp of a servant who has not been given a share of Your love.

21. My God, You have commanded me to return to created things, so return me to them with the raiment of lights and the guidance of inner vision [as-istibsar], so that I may return from them to You just as I entered You from them, with my secret [as-sirr] protected from looking at them and my fervor [al-himma] raised above dependence on them. For, truly, You have power over everything.

And he said (may Allah be pleased with him!):

22. My God, here is my lowliness manifest before You, and here is my state unhidden from You. From You, I seek union with You. I proceed from You in my argumentation about You. So guide me to You with Your light and set me up before You through sincerity of servanthood!

23. My God, make me know by means of Your treasured-up Knowledge, and protect me by means of the mystery of Your well-guarded Name.

24. My God, make me realize the inner realities of those drawn nigh, and make me voyage in the path of those possessed by attraction [ahl al-jadhib].

25. My God, through Your direction [tadbir] make me dispense with self-direction, and through Your choosing [ikhtiyar] for me make me dispense with my choosing; and make me stand in the very center of my extreme need [idtirar].

26. My God, pull me out of my self-abasement and purify me of doubting [shakk] and associationism [shirk] before I descend into my grave. I seek Your help, so help me; in You I trust, so entrust me to no one else; You do I ask, so do not disappoint me; Your kindness do I desire, do not refuse me; it is to You that I belong, so do not banish me; and it is at Your door that I stand, so do not cast me away.

27. My God, Your contentment is too holy for there to be a cause for it in You, so how can there be a cause for it in me? Through Your Essence [dhat], You are independent of any benefit coming to You, so why should You not be independent of me?

28. My God, destiny and the decree of fate have overcome me, and desire with its passional attachments has taken me prisoner. Be my Ally so that You may help me and others through me. Enrich me with Your kindness, so that, content with You, I can do without asking. You are the one who makes the lights shine in the hearts of Your saints so that they know You and affirm Your Oneness. You are the one who makes otherness [al-aghyar] disappear from the hearts of Your lovers so that they love none but You and take refuge in none but You. You are the one who befriends them when the world makes them forlorn. You are the one who guides them till the landmarks become clear for them. He who has lost You—what has he found? He who has found You—what has he lost? Whoever takes someone other than You as a substitute is disappointed, and whoever wants to stray away from You is lost.

29. My God, how could hope be put in what is other than You, for You have not cut off Your benevolence? And how could someone other than You be asked, for You have not changed the norms of conferring blessings? O He who makes His beloved friends taste the sweetness of intimacy with Himself so that they stand before Him with praise, and O He who clothes His saints with the vestments of reverential fear towards Himself so that they stand glorifying His glory—You are the Invoker [adh-dhakir] prior to invokers, You are the Origin [al-Badi'] of benevolence prior to servants turning to You, You are the Munificent [al-Jawwad] in giving prior to the asking of seekers, and You are the Giver [al-wahhab] who, in respect to what You have given us, asks us for a loan!

30. My God, seek me with Your grace so that I may reach You, and attract me with Your blessings so that I may draw near to You.

31. My God, my hope is not cut off from You even though I disobey You, just as my fear does not leave me even though I obey You.

32. My God, the world has pushed me toward You, and my knowledge of Your generosity has

made me stand before You.

33. My God, how could I be disappointed while You are my hope, or how could I be betrayed while my trust is in You?

34. My God, how can I deem myself exalted while You have planted me in lowliness, or why should I not deem myself exalted, for You have related me to Yourself? Why should I not be in need of You for You have set me up in poverty, or why should I be needy, for You have enriched me with Your goodness? Apart from You there is no God. You have made Yourself known to everything, so nothing is ignorant of You. And it is You who have made Yourself known to everything, so nothing is ignorant of You. And it is You who have made Yourself known to me in everything; thus, I have seen You manifest in everything, and You are the Manifest in everything. O He who betakes Himself to His throne [‘arsh] with His clemency [rahmaniyya] so that the throne is hidden in His clemency, just as the Universe [al-‘awalim] is hidden in His throne—You have annihilated created things [bi’l-athar], and obliterated otherness [al-aghyar] with the englobing spheres of light [bi-muhitat aflak al-anwar]! O He who illumines with the perfection of His beauty [baha’] and whose Infinity [‘azama] is realized by the gnostic’s secret [al-asrar]—how can You be hidden, for You are the Exterior [az-Zahir]? Or how can You be absent, for You are the Ever-Present Watcher [ar-Raqib al-Hadir]?

Allah is the Granter of Success [al-Muwaffiq], and in Him I take refuge!